DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 111 406 JC 750 464

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TITLE A Survey of Community Attitudes toward Occupational Education.
INSTITUTION Compton Community Coll., Calif.
SPONS AGENCY California Community Colleges, Sacramento. Office of the Chancellor.
PUB DATE 74
NOTE 33p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.95 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Career Education; Community Attitudes; High School Students; Junior Colleges; Junior College Students; *Minority Groups; Negro Attitudes; *Occupational Aspiration; *Occupational Choice; Occupational Guidance; Questionnaires; *Student Attitudes; Tables (Data); Vocational Counseling; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Minority Attitudes

ABSTRACT

In order to identify minority attitudes toward occupational education, a survey form was developed and administered to a stratified random sample of 85 high school students, 85 community college students, and 80 community residents in the college's primarily Black service area. In 17 tables, the authors note the composition of the group by sex, age, and ethnic group; expressed occupational goals; preferred methods for entering an occupation; persons influential in determining career choice; training methods and institutions respondents wished to avoid and reasons for avoidance. The authors attribute negative attitudes toward occupational education to the unrealistic job expectations of minority high school and community college students and blame these aspirations on ineffective career guidance in the high schools. Students need a minimal understanding of the requirements for educational programs and careers, and of the severity of the competition for the available positions. The authors recommended a once-a-week multi-hour session and year-long credit course for high school seniors to be given at the college. Considering the low influence of teachers and counselors, the course could be given by carefully chosen professional, business, government, and labor leaders; better community and industry relations along with future job placements might be valuable fringe benefits. (NHM)

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A SURVEY OF COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TOWARD OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

1974

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COMPTON COLLEGE
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Serving the communities of Compton, Enterprise, Lynwood, Paramount, and Willowbrook

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FORWARD

In any community-based institution, having service and leadership of that area as part of its goals, it is necessary for planning to be realistic and to be just. Compton Community College has a long history of attempting to fulfill this need.

It is with this as one of its goals that the institution commissioned Mr. Fred Oberlander and staff to provide some understanding of community attitudes as they relate to occupational education. It was expected that this survey would then offer us an opportunity to better understand the community for which we strive to provide meaningful services.

This survey has now given us a greater understanding of the District and will provide a base from which we can develop necessary programs.

To those component districts, without whose assistance we could not have completed this survey--Lynwood Unified, Paramount Unified and Compton Unified School Districts--we express our sincere appreciation. To the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges, we also express our thanks for the funding necessary to carry out this project.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

We would like to thank the following people for the parts they have played in completing this project. Their assistance has been invaluable.

Compton College

Roger D. Beam, Assistant Dean, Occupational Education
Rosetta Barnett, Administrative Intern
Floyd Hopper, Director, Evening Division
Fannie McDuffie, Division Chairman, Counseling
Robert Smith, Student
Jerry Valenta, Division Chairman, Business

Compton Unified School District

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Arthur Leeming, Vice Principal

Paramount Unified School District

Dick Caldwell, Principal
Don Jones, Research

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INTRODUCTION - PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

The Compton Community College staff in its continuing effort to improve the programs of the College sees a particular need for re-evaluating the vocational education programs. Several factors indicate a divergence between existing programs and the attitudes of students toward them. Enrollment in certain vocational courses is far greater than would be expected from a survey of other courses - "It is the belief of educators that the minority community holds very negative ideas about occupational education in the community college."[1] This belief in a problem of attitudes receives support from several Compton Unified School District graduate surveys. Furthermore, the problem of course content was analyzed in an earlier project.[2]

The objectives of the survey were:

(1) To identify minority community and student attitudes toward specific areas of occupational education and occupational education in general. Particular interest will be given to these areas of low selection and high availability (as indicated by local employers);

(2) To identify the reasons for these attitudes, particularly the reasons for the negative attitudes.

OTHER APPLICABLE RESEARCH

A review of the research into attitudes about vocational education revealed several areas which would be applicable to the present problem. These may be seeking information about career opportunities, choosing an occupation, training for that occupation, feelings about the job and factors which were influential in the selection of the occupation.

The Community Occupational Survey - 1970 revealed significant discrepancies between available jobs and student program selection.[3] The effect of student plans on enrollment is obvious; however, how many students develop those plans is not so obvious. Pallone[4] found that persons who hold a particular job and parents, particularly mothers, were more influential in occupational choices than teachers or counselors.

1. Project Proposal, p.1.
2. Oberlander, Fred, Community Occupational Survey - 1970, Compton College.
3. Oberlander, 23.
4. Pallone, Richard and Hurley, "Further Data On Key Influencers Of Occupational Expectation Among Minority Youth", Journal of Counseling Psychology, Vol. 20, No. 5, 484-486, 1973.

occupational level was related to planning and preparation by Hart[5], who found that many of the people in skilled and semi-skilled jobs chose their present employment more because of chance events than because of career planning.

THE SURVEY FORM

Previous research suggests a focus on career plans, influences on career choices and job attitudes. The questions in these areas were designed to include a range of possibilities from both the positive and negative viewpoints. In addition, the survey form also contained several opportunities for written comments.

After the initial design of the survey form, preliminary testing and subsequent revisions, it was submitted to a panel of consultants (Roger Beam, Rosetta Barnett, Fannie McDuffie and Jerry Valenta) for further comment and revision. Mr. Floyd Hopper also made recommendations for changes.

The survey questionnaire was then administered by an interviewer or teacher to students and the community at large.

THE SURVEY METHOD

The survey form was administered to a stratified random sample of eighty-five high school students, eighty-five Compton College students, and eighty community residents. The number of people surveyed in each school or community was proportional to the total population of the Compton College District. Statistical analysis of the three groups has been used to verify that the sampling was, in fact, random.

The surveys were administered to general education classes in both high schools and college. A basic consideration was to avoid groups made up primarily of either academic or vocational students. In the high schools, one entire class was surveyed; whereas, at Compton College, only four or five students per class were surveyed.

The community residents surveyed were selected by a grid system. A map of the college district was marked off into a grid whose squares had an area of approximately one fourth square mile. A staff member went to the street intersection nearest each grid intersection and then interviewed the resident living in the fifth even-numbered house on the block. If the resident living in the fifth

5. Hart, Rayner and Christensen, "Planning, Preparation, and Chance in Occupational Entry", Journal of Vocational Behavior, 1, 279-285, 1971.

house was not home or was of the wrong sex (the survey design required alternating sexes), the interviewer continued to the next house on the block.

TABLE 1[6]

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SURVEYED IN EACH GROUP

Centennial High School	16
Compton High School	27
Dominguez High School	15
Lynwood High School	11
Paramount High School	16
	85
Compton College (Day)	45
Compton College (Night)	40
	85
Compton, City	33
Lynwood, City	18
Paramount, City	15
Enterprise and Willowbrook Areas	14
	80

The survey has created a large amount of data which has been put into tables for clarity and emphasis. The percentage of people in each group who chose each response has been computed to give an indication of the relative importance of each response. Each question has then been validated by computing the chi-square value. This method is commonly used to assess the over-all differences between the groups to determine whether or not the response to a question is greater than that which would be obtained by chance. If the group's response to a question was found to be valid, Z-scores were calculated to determine which responses within that group were most meaningful.

6. The actual number of people surveyed occasionally differs from the correct proportion due to rounding off and a few invalid responses.

The groups are usually presented in vertical columns; therefore, the percentages for each group are presented in a vertical column. Similarly, the data for each response to a question are presented in a horizontal row, and the group differences should, therefore, be read horizontally. When chi-squares and Z-scores have a probability of .05 or less they are considered significant, whether high or low. In other words, when the odds are better than 1 to 20, we must assume the differences are caused by chance and are inconclusive. It is important to remember that chi-square is a test of over-all differences, not individual differences.

THE RESULTS

An analysis of the ethnic and sex characteristics is presented in Table 2. Statistical analysis proves that the numbers of males and females are not significantly different. The analysis of ethnic differences is significant, however. A careful interpretation of Table 2 will show that the differences are not unexpected but permit some insight into age distributions of the various groups.

The major discrepancies are in the college student group in which the majority of students are either black or "other".

TABLE 2

COMPOSITION BY SEX AND ETHNIC GROUP

	Number in Group				% of Group			
	High School	College	Community	TOTAL	High School	College	Community	TOTAL
Male	41	43	39	123	48.2	50.1	48.7	49.2
Female	44	42	41	127	51.7	49.4	51.2	50.8
TOTALS	85	85	80	250	99.9	99.5	99.9	100.0

	High School	College	Community	TOTAL	High School	College	Community	TOTAL
Black	58	64*	44*	166	68.2	75.2*	55.0*	66.4
Mexican-American	10	2*	20*	32	11.7	2.3*	25.0*	12.8
Caucasian	15	3*	15	33	17.6	3.5*	18.7	13.2
Other and Unknown	2	16*	1	19	2.3	18.9*	1.2	7.6
TOTALS	85	85	80	250	99.8	99.9*	99.9	100.0

SEX	ETHNIC GROUP
x2 = 4.18	x2 = 47.5
prob.= .001	prob. = .25

* Values have probability of .05 or less.

Since two-thirds of the sample is composed of students, the ages from fifteen to twenty are presented individually and as a range.

TABLE 3

COMPOSITION BY AGE

	Number in Group			% of Group		
	High School	College	Community	High School	College	Community
15		1			1.2	
16	18			21.2		
17	52	2		61.2	2.4	
18	14	12	1	16.5	14.1	1.2
19	1	12		1.2	14.1	
20		2	3		2.4	3.8
15-20	85	29	4	100.0	34.1	5.0
21-30		43	23		50.6	28.8
31-40		11	18		13.0	22.5
41-50		2	21		2.4	26.3
51-60			11			13.7
61-65			1			1.2
66+			2			2.5
TOTALS:	85	85	80	100.1	100.2	100.0

The careers listed by the students were categorized according to the Dictionary of Occupational Titles[7]. As might be expected from idealistic students, the careers selected were primarily professional, semi-professional or managerial. On the other hand, the jobs listed by the community residents were fairly representative of the current job market. Although many of the students may be able to function quite effectively in higher-level careers (professional, semi-professional, etc.), the unfortunate reality is that many others may not.

7. U. S. Dept. of Labor, Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Vol. 1.

TABLE 4

EXPRESSED OCCUPATIONAL GOALS

	Number in Group			% of Group		
	High School	College	Community	High School	College	Community
Professional	18*	5		21.2*	5.9	
Semi-Professional	23	36*	5*	27.1	42.40*	6.3*
Managerial	5	16*	3*	5.9	18.8*	3.8*
Clerical	10	10	12	11.8	11.8	15.0
Sales			1			1.3
Service-Personal	9	4	3	10.6	4.7	3.8
Service-Protective		2			2.4	
Service-Building						
Agriculture						
Skilled	7	3*	17*	8.2	3.5*	21.3*
Semi-Skilled	5	6*	21*	5.9	7.1*	26.3*
Home			16			20.0
No Occupation	8	3	2	9.4	3.5	2.5
TOTALS:	85	85	80	100.1	100.1	100.3

$x2 = 132.5$
prob. = .001

*Values have probability of .05 or less.

Although careers of the sample group generally did not differ significantly when analyzed by sex, these data are included for the purpose of completeness and the reader's information.

TABLE 5

OCCUPATIONAL GOALS CATEGORIZED BY SEX

	Number in Group		% of Group	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Professional	10	13	43.5	56.7
Semi-Professional	31	33	48.5	51.6
Managerial	16	5	76.2	23.8
Clerical	4*	28*	12.5*	87.5*
Sales	1		100.0	
Service-Personal[8]	7	9	43.8	56.3
Service-Protective	2		100.0	
Service-Building				
Agricultural				
Skilled	27*	3*	90.0*	10.0*
Semi-Skilled	18	14	56.3	43.8
Home		16*		100.0*
No Occupation	7	6	53.8	46.2

$x^2 = 66.5$
prob. = .001

*Values have probability of .05 or less.

Job preferences were also surveyed from a negative viewpoint. That is, students and residents were asked which occupations they would least likely enter (and second least likely). Although the results for each group are informative, there are no significant trends or differences.

8. The Service-Personal category includes jobs such as vocational nurse, food service and entertainment.

TABLE 6

FIRST AND SECOND LEAST LIKELY OCCUPATIONAL GOALS

LEAST LIKELY

	Number in Group			% of Group		
	High School	College	Community	High School	College	Community
No Choice	3	5	6	3.5	5.9	7.5
Mechanical	26	35	22	30.6	41.2	27.5
Technical	6	7	7	7.1	8.2	8.8
Trades	9	5	6	10.6	5.9	7.5
Office	21	20	20	24.8	23.6	25.0
Other	20	13	19	23.5	15.3	23.8
TOTALS:	85	85	80	100.1	100.1	100.1

SECOND LEAST LIKELY

	Number in Group			% of Group		
	High School	College	Community	High School	College	Community
No Choice	15	12	26*	17.6	14.1	32.5
Mechanical	18	10	8	21.1	11.8	10.0
Technical	18	20	10	21.1	23.5	12.5
Trades	15	24*	11	17.6	28.2	13.8
Office	7	11	9	8.2	12.9	11.3
Other	12	8	16	14.1	9.4	20.0
TOTALS:	85	85	80	99.7	99.9	100.1

LEAST LIKELY

$x^2 = 5$
prob.= .96

SECOND LEAST LIKELY

$x^2 = 25$
prob. = .01

*Values have probability of .05 or less.

TABLE 7

FIRST AND SECOND LEAST LIKELY OCCUPATIONAL GOALS BY SEX

LEAST LIKELY

	Number in Group		% of Group	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Mechanical	35	51	40.7	59.3
Technical	11	10	52.4	47.6
Trades	7	13	35.0	65.0
Office	37	24	60.7	39.3
Other[9]	28*		100.0	
No Choice	5	5	50.0	50.0

SECOND LEAST LIKELY

	Male	Female	Male	Female
Mechanical	19	18	51.4	48.7
Technical	21	27	43.8	56.2
Trades	23	28	45.1	54.9
Office	19	8	70.4	29.7
Other	19	27	41.3	58.7
No Choice	22	19	53.7	46.3

LEAST LIKELY

$x^2 = 47.50$
prob. = .001

SECOND LEAST LIKELY

$x^2 = 7.68$
prob. = .20

*Values have probability of .05 or less.

Although many people placed a very high value on education, there are some contradictory responses. For example, "on-the-job training" was frequently cited as an effective method of job-training. Without even considering the validity of this response, it must be noted that job-training is not education but an alternative to education. As to the validity of "on-the-job training", it must be asked whether "on-the-job training" merits such a large response.

9. The job Category "other" includes food services, drafting, etc.

TABLE 8

PREFERRED METHODS FOR ENTERING AN OCCUPATION-

	Number in Group			% of Group		
	High School	College	Community	High School	College	Community
Be promoted On-the-job	1	6	4	1.2	6.0	4.7
Training	16	20	32*	18.6	20.0	37.2*
Apprenticeship	5	6	12	5.81	6.0	13.9
Education	63*	67*	32*	73.3*	67.0*	37.2*
No Training Needed	1	1	6	1.2	1.0	6.9*
TOTALS:	85	99	86	100.1	100.0	99.9

$x^2 = 35.36$
prob. = .001

*Values have probability of .05 or less.

One of the most significant areas to emerge was that of influences on career choices. The large number of people who indicated no influence is surprising; it is hard to imagine how a valid occupational choice could have been made. Those people who indicated no particular influences are not likely to become meaningfully involved in any vocational education programs since their "choice" of occupation can probably be freely changed. In Table 9 it would appear that all of the communities' second choices are significant, but this is a statistical phenomena due to the large number of people failing to make an alternate choice.

TABLE 9

MOST INFLUENTIAL AND SECOND MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN CAREER CHOICES

MOST INFLUENTIAL

	Number in Group			% of Group		
	High School	College	Community	High School	College	Community
Parents	42*	35	12*	49.4*	41.1	15.0*
Teachers	11	6	4	12.9	7.1	5.0
People on Job	17	23*	3*	20.0	27.1*	3.8*
Relatives	2	6	6	2.3	7.1	7.5
Counselors	2	4	0	2.3	4.7	0
Friends	4	8	2	4.7	9.4	2.5
No Choice	7*	3*	53*	8.2*	3.5*	66.3*
TOTALS:	85	85	80	99.8	100.0	100.1

SECOND MOST INFLUENTIAL

	Number in Group			% of Group		
	High School	College	Community	High School	College	Community
Parents	8	12	0	10.3	14.6	
Teachers	12	14	2*	15.4	17.1	7.4*
People on Job	11	7	0	14.1	8.5	
Relatives	13	21*	3*	16.7	25.6*	11.1*
Counselors	5	4	2	6.4	4.9	7.4
Friends	15	19*	2*	19.2	23.2*	7.4*
No Choice	14	5*	18*	17.9	6.1*	66.7*
TOTALS:	78	82	27	100.0	100.0	100.0

1ST CHOICE

$x^2 = 290$
prob. = .001

2ND CHOICE

$x^2 = 181.39$
prob. = .001

*Values have probability of .05 or better.

(Note: Second most influential table does not include "no choices" on most influential table.)

The first choices of most influential people were also analyzed in terms of age groups. It is interesting to note the almost universal influence of parents, and, in the older groups, the increasing significance of "no choice". The choices of the two groups ranging from ages 21 - 40 would appear to be highly significant; however, this is a statistical phenomena due to the large number of "no choice".

TABLE 10

MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE BY AGE

Number of People

Age	Parents	Teachers	People on Job	Relatives	Counselors	Friends	No Choice	Totals
15	1*							1
16	8*	2	8*	2				20
17	26*	6	7	2*	4	2*	7	54
18	14*	2	4			2	2	24
19	5*	5	1	2		3		16
20	1	1		1			2*	5
21-30	17*	5	16*	3*	3*	4	18*	66
31-40	6*		4*	3*		1	15	29
41-50	4		2	2		1	13*	22
51-60	4*			1		1	5*	11
61-65	1*							1
66+							2*	2

% of Age Group

Age	Parents	Teachers	People on Job	Relatives	Counselors	Friends	No Choice	Totals
15	100.0*							100.0
16	44.5*	11.1	44.5*					100.1
17	48.1*	11.1	13.0	3.7*	7.4	3.7*	13.0	100.0
18	51.9*	18.5	14.8			7.4	7.4	100.0
19	38.5*	15.4	7.7	15.4		23.1		100.1
20	20.0	20.0		20.0			40.0*	100.0
21-30	25.8*	7.6	24.2*	4.5*	4.5*	6.1	27.3*	100.0
31-40	20.7*		13.8*	10.3*		3.4	51.7	99.9
41-50	18.2		9.1	9.1		4.5	59.1*	100.0
51-60	36.4*			9.1		9.1	45.5	100.1
61-65	100.0*							100.0
66+							100*	100.0

$x^2 = 95$
prob. = .001

*Values have probability of .05 or less.

All of the people interviewed were asked to list any other skills, activities or experiences which they felt were influential in their choice of careers. Although percentages for these responses are interesting, a detailed analysis, unfortunately, would be inconclusive, due to the large number failing to respond to this question. This is further evidence of the lack of influential people and experiences.

TABLE 11

OTHER INFLUENCES ON CAREER CHOICES

	Number in Group			% of Group		
	High School	College	Community	High School	College	Community
School Courses	17	15	7	17.9	17.6	8.8
Hobbies	15	5	3	15.8	5.9	3.8
Volunteer Activities	13	5	1	13.7	5.9	1.3
Home Activities	5	4	7	5.3	4.7	8.8
Miscellaneous	7	14	5	7.4	16.5	6.3
No Choice	38	42	57	40.0	49.4	71.3
TOTALS:	95	85	80	100.1	100.0	100.3

$x^2 = 70$
prob. = .001

TABLE 12[10]

SINGLE MOST INFLUENTIAL ITEM

	Number in Group			% of Group		
	High School	College	Community	High School	College	Community
Family Members	11	6	5	12.3	7.1	6.3
School Staff	4	2		4.7	2.4	
Other People	2	1		2.4	1.2	
Hobbies	2			2.4		
Activities	8	13	2	9.4	15.3	2.5
School Work	3	1		3.5	1.2	
People on Job	7	3		8.2	3.5	
No Choice	48	59	73	56.5	69.4	91.3

$x^2 = 37.5$
prob. = .01

10. This table is included for information only.

Responses to questions on negative attitudes were quite revealing. High school students had very definite opinions on which educational institutions to avoid, whereas community residents were generally open to all types of education.

TABLE 13

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO BE AVOIDED

	Number in Group			% of Group		
Would Avoid	High School	College	Community	High School	College	Community
Apprenticeship Training	19*	11	3*	18.1*	11.5	3.5*
Trade School	20*	25*	12*	19.0*	26.3*	14.1*
Voc. Ed. in Comm. College	45*	6*	8*	42.9*	6.3*	9.4*
College or University	15	7	6	14.3	7.3	7.1
None of Above		41*	50*		43.1*	58.9*
All of Above	3		4	2.9		4.7
No Response	3	5	2	2.9	5.3	7.4

$$x^2 = 119.7$$
$$\text{prob.} = .001$$

*Values have probability of .05 or less.

The reasons given for avoiding certain institutions generally center around the employer and the quality of training. Table 14 does indicate student concerns. Industry has not been asked to participate in curriculum development. The mutual benefits indicate it would be desirable to increase communication between industry and students, and, considering the large impact of parental influences, possibly to include dialog with the families of high school and new college students.

TABLE 14

REASONS FOR AVOIDING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

	Number in Group			% of Group		
	High School	College	Community	High School	College	Community
Employer Won't Hire	15*	33*	16	17.9*	27.7*	16.0
Quality of Training	24	21	12	28.6	17.6	12.0
People in Program	9	10	4	10.7	8.4	4.0
Lack of Community Approval	6*	16	33*	7.1*	13.4	33.0*
Lack of Employer Approval	10	19	13	11.9	16.0	13.0
Too Demanding	11	17	13	13.1	14.2	13.0
Other[11]	9	3	9	10.7	2.5	9.0
TOTALS:	84	119	100	100.0	99.8	100.0

$x^2 = 39.39$
prob. = .001

*Values have probability of .05 or less.

11. Comments usually related either to costs or specific demands.

TABLE 15

ATTITUDE SURVEY RANKING

	National Data								National Data							
	Community	College	High School	Skilled	Professional	Supervisory	Executive		Community	College	High School	Skilled	Professional	Supervisory	Executive	
Advancement								**Regulations**								
1-4	53	57	34	47	52	61	22		4	11	0	1	8	14	22	
5-8	22	20	34	26	35	31	78		16	25	14	6	22	27	11	*
9-12	16	13	23	25	13	4	-		42	32	36	31	36	37	44	
13-15	9	10	10	2	-	1	-		37	22	51	62	34	22	23	
Benefits								**Responsibility**								
1-4	66	53	30	20	-	-	-	*	25	16	18	6	39	35	55	*
5-8	20	22	33	33	23	10	-		34	30	26	31	38	36	45	
9-12	12	14	23	28	32	30	56		29	40	35	50	18	23	-	
13-15	5	11	15	20	46	60	45	*	16	15	21	13	5	6	-	
Community								**Satisfaction**								
Standing 1-4	66	19	13	-	-	-	-	**	18	37	44	13	59	71	78	
5-8	20	15	19	6	-	6	11	*	46	25	40	35	29	23	22	
9-12	24	15	28	13	18	23	66		25	26	13	42	8	4	-	
13-15	42	45	40	81	82	71	24		11	12	3	10	4	2	-	
Compensation								**Security**								
1-4	17	23	13	40	26	24	23		53	45	40	90	33	30	-	
5-8	39	30	31	33	21	34	56		32	23	29	9	29	20	11	
9-12	32	29	44	20	44	29	22		16	21	36	1	16	26	44	
13-15	12	17	11	17	9	5	-		4	11	8	-	22	24	45	*
Hours								**Scope**								
1-4	11	17	39	44	-	-	-	*	8	17	6	3	31	29	67	
5-8	28	45	35	39	16	8	-		16	24	16	9	18	27	33	
9-12	7	24	10	15	31	18	11		32	37	40	25	23	26	-	
13-15	13	13	3	2	53	14	89	*	45	27	35	63	28	18	-	
Independence								**Supervision**								
1-4	38	26	11	6	20	20	87		21	14	24	33	21	17	11	
5-8	22	31	33	19	49	37	12		34	27	34	37	41	34	44	
9-12	28	33	43	45	29	27	1		29	29	16	13	36	42	45	
13-15	11	11	13	30	2	6	-		18	30	26	17	2	7	-	*
Pay								**Type Work**								
1-4	48	41	45	42	24	25	11		37	37	74	30	69	54	22	
5-8	26	25	30	14	43	40	33		26	26	10	35	13	25	44	
9-12	17	21	10	20	32	21	13		30	22	8	22	7	9	22	
13-15	13	13	10	24	1	14	34		9	15	5	13	11	12	12	
Physical Considerations																
1-4	18	11	13	3	-	1	-									
5-8	30	38	20	25	-	2	-	*								
9-12	28	44	39	30	21	15	11									
13-15	30	17	26	42	79	82	89									

The fifteen-question, forced choice questionnaire comprising Section 8 on the survey reveals some startling insights into attitudes when compared with the National Historical Research data which has been developed over the past fifteen years.

Of particular significance is that 66% of high school students rank benefits among the first eight choices, while only about 23% of the professionals, supervisors and executives do the same.

Community standing is even more significant. 32% of high school students rank work which indicates personal achievement in the eyes of the community in the top eight ranks while only approximately 11% of professionals, supervisors and executives do likewise.

Good working hours are important to only approximately 16% of the "prestige group" in the national sample while 74% of high school students are looking for this.

33% of high school students rank work free from pressure (Physical Considerations) among the top eight as compared with only 3% of the professional-managerial group.

Work which requires the readiness to meet obligations (Responsibility) is ranked among the first four choices by 35 to 55% of the Control Prestige Group as compared with 18% of the high school students aspiring to get into this group.

What does it all mean? Educators, parents and employers have failed to effectively communicate one of the most basic of basics. Nothing comes free. One must work to achieve a position, but hard work alone can not do it. One must be able to realistically appraise one's own ability and determination. For this type of understanding better avenues of communication are required. Without insight and understanding implementation can not be expected.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Much evidence indicates that Compton Community College meets many of the needs of its students and those of the community it serves. The survey, however, points up several major problem areas with which the College staff must deal if it is to keep pace with the ever-changing scene:

1. Generally, high school students do not at present accept the advice of teachers and counselors.
2. Although students are greatly influenced by the plans their parents have for them (Pallone, et al., found that the mother's influence is approximately 3 times greater than that of the father), combined parental influence is significant in only about one-half of the high school senior population. The other half relies on other influences.
3. None of these other influences is statistically significant by itself; however, when combined, they indicate that the majority of high school seniors have no truly interested, knowledgeable source of information on which they rely for career guidance. Thereby a "vacuum" exists which leads to drifting into occupations which only by chance are suited to the individual's capabilities and potential.
4. It is of great interest to note that negative attitudes to vocational education are apparently formed early in the student's training. High school students who, as discussed before, have no real source of input, significantly rule out vocational education in community colleges, apprenticeship training and trade schools. Yet the vast majority of career opportunities are in the areas for which these rejected means of education prepare students. When one concludes by logical inference that "academic training" for professional jobs is preferred by the majority, then one must also ask, "can this majority successfully defeat the attrition rate, both within the university system and, even more important, in real life competition for the approximately 10% of career opportunities which are available".
5. The reasons given for avoiding educational institutions are strong indications of lack of knowledge of the quality and regard for the type of training available and of deep seated feelings and attitudes which exert great influence on high school seniors. Many high school students have unrealistic occupational expectations. It is doubtful that such large a number of students have either the ability or the temperament for the high level jobs they indicate. Assuming that all of those students who so desired were able to successfully complete their educations, it is doubtful that there would be enough jobs for them. It is not the school's place to pass judgment on a student's occupational choice; however, it is the school's place to supply the information needed to enable a student to make a reasonably valid choice.

Students need the opportunity to assess their chances of satisfying the educational or job requirements they may encounter. This would imply a minimal understanding of the requirements for various educational programs and careers, and of the severity of the competition for the available positions. It is hoped that, along with this understanding of educational and employment requirements, an understanding of the job market would be developed. Those best qualified by academic training to communicate this to students are the counselors, if their guidance were more sought out and accepted than the survey indicates.

6. To solve these problems two integrated but separate programs appear indicated:

   a. A once-a-week multi-hour session and year long credit course at the College might be provided to give high school seniors (or even juniors) the information they need for making realistic occupational or educational plans. Considering the relatively low influence of teachers and counselors, the bulk of the academically coordinated (lecture, question and answer them) course could be given by carefully chosen professional, business, government and labor leaders. The intent would be to give students a practical knowledge of what they can expect at all job levels. As part of this course, students could research and report on several career alternatives. Apart from the various advantages to the students, better community and industry relations along with future job placements might be valuable finge benefits.
   b. Many people do not seem to plan careers, but merely seek out and take available jobs. This has been suggested by some of the earlier research as well as by the large number of people, particularly in the community, who can not cite any specific occupational influences. This is further emphasized by the great number of people who believe in on-the-job training. Little do they know that this is often very narrow in application and questionable in quality. Students seem to feel that companies will train them for their jobs because each company prefers employees trained for their particular methods of operation. This is not statistically reflected in the survey, but is based on frequent comments from participants. Today's students do not consider that industry often does not find it necessary to train in order to fill job openings. People who seek available employment should not be criticized unduly. In many respects, their ideas conform to actual practice. Men and women do need jobs and they can seldom afford to be selective. Also, there is a question of the validity of training for a job which may not be obtained or for an occupation one may not like. Still, these people are missing opportunities

for maximizing their potential as well as missing the better jobs. In order to reach these students, the College needs to offer a career planning program complete with vocational, aptitude, psychological testing and counseling to provide the students the means to understand themselves and translate their particular abilities into a realistic occupational opportunity program.

7. The College needs to impress its value upon the students and the community. The majority of current activities is worthwhile and relevant, but, unfortunately, their values are not always obvious. The survey results suggest that attention should be given to selling the program's quality and requirements as well as its relevancy. The proposals in 6 of course would also assist with this.
The large number of high school students who would avoid vocational education in a community college dramatizes an impression developed by the community interviewer. To some extent, Compton Community College is associated with the various school districts. The College thereby receives blame for the school districts' failures as well as credit for their successes. There is a real need for high school students and the community to perceive the College as a worthwhile, relevant institution which requires independent effort on the part of its students. The College must get across that it is not an extension of high school but is, instead, an institution of higher learning for those who have the ability and motivation to appreciate and take advantage of the educational opportunities it offers.

8. Woven through the whole series of responses, particularly those which were found to be statistically significant and not subject to sampling chance error, and also through the expressed rank order of attitudes which served as a control on the data elsewhere developed, runs a subtle but solid theme.
Attitudes of minority students toward occupational education appear to be formed less as a result of a positive thrust than as a consequence of a bombardment of ideas and feelings - expressed or not - which keep pounding, "I am somebody---special".
Far be it for us to deny here this basic truth about anyone. In the context of what has been learned from the survey, however, one aspect of this feeling, which is not nebulous but a rather solid fact if it causes people to do things, takes on great significance.
Everywhere throughout the survey and particularly in the rankings of Question 8, it is clear that present sources of input are not heavily relied upon by the minority student; and that based on what he or she has experienced, felt and was willing to hear, he or she has chosen occupational goals of "prestige" (Note: Community Standing, Benefits) while he or she has not had sufficient experience or exposure to appreciate the effort required to attain these goals. (Note: Hours, Regulations, Responsibility)

Last, but not least, the College must find a way to bring the objectives and performance standards of students into harmony to achieve the motivational thrust which is fundamental to job success. Community involvement and subtle exposure to the factors common among successful people - such as hard work, dedication, involvement, positive thinking and self reliance - appear to be the key.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEY

1. PERSONAL DATA:

   School _____ Age ___ Sex _____

2. CONSIDERING BOTH THE AVAILABLE JOBS AND YOUR ABILITIES, WHAT, REALISTICALLY, IS YOUR LONG-TERM OCCUPATIONAL GOAL?
   Name the job or type of job _____

3. WHICH DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BEST WAY FOR YOU TO ACHIEVE YOUR OCCUPATIONAL GOAL?

   _____ a. Find a job and wait for promotion;

   _____ b. Work at a company that provides on-the-job training;

   _____ c. Get into an apprenticeship program;

   _____ d. Get more education; (for example, community college, university, or trade school)

   _____ e. My goals do not require further preparation.

4. WHAT INFLUENCED YOU TO CHOOSE YOUR OCCUPATIONAL GOAL?

   a. Which three of the following people were most influential in this decision? (list them in order of importance)

   _____ Parents _____ Relatives _____ Friends

   _____ Teachers _____ Counselors

   _____ People presently employed in that job

   b. If personal experiences influenced your choice of occupation, list those skills, activities, or experiences which were most influential.

      1. _____

      2. _____

      3. _____

      4. _____

      5. _____

   c. From these two lists, indicate the three influences which were most important in your choice of an occupation.

      1. _____

      2. _____

      3. _____

5. WHICH OCCUPATIONAL AREAS WOULD YOU LEAST LIKELY CHOOSE? (Mark the least likely with a (1), the second least likely with a (2) and the third least likely (3).

_____ Mechanical type jobs (machinist, auto mechanic, heavy equipment operator);
_____ Technical type jobs (electrical, electronic, industrial, laboratory, quality control, research);
_____ Trades (construction, electrician, heating, air-conditioning, insulation, sheet metal, structural steel, fabrication);
_____ Office and related jobs (secretarial, clerical, bookkeeping, data processing);
_____ Miscellaneous (food services, drivers, technical writing, drafting);
_____ Other jobs or job types (name) _____

6. IN PREPARING YOURSELF FOR YOUR FUTURE OCCUPATION, ARE THERE ANY AREAS OF TRAINING OR LEARNING WHICH YOU PLAN TO AVOID?

_____ a. Apprenticeship training;

_____ b. Trade school or trade center;

_____ c. Vocational education in a community college;

_____ d. College or university;

_____ e. None of the above;

_____ f. All of the above (why?) _____

7. IF CERTAIN AREAS OF TRAINING OR EDUCATION ARE BEST AVOIDED, WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR AVOIDING THEM?

_____ a. It is hard to get jobs because employers do not accept the program;

_____ b. The training has little value because of poor instruction and/or equipment such as tools, machines, typewriters, etc.;

_____ c. The type of people with whom one would have to associate;

_____ d. The program is poorly accepted by the community;

_____ e. The program is poorly accepted by the employers;

_____ f. The requirements of the program are too demanding;

_____ g. Other _____

_____ h. Other _____

8. DECIDE WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU AND PLACE A (1) ON THE LINE IN FRONT OF IT. THEN DECIDE WHICH IS SECOND IN IMPORTANCE TO YOU AND PLACE A (2) IN FRONT OF IT. CONTINUE LISTING THE ITEMS IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE TO YOU UNTIL THE LEAST IMPORTANT ITEM IS LISTED AS NUMBER (16).

_____ Advancement (opportunity for promotion);

_____ Benefits (vacations, sick pay, insurance, etc.);

_____ Community Standing (work which indicates personal achievement in the eyes of the community);

_____ Company (employment by a company whose policies are good);

_____ Hours (good starting and quitting times - good number of hours per day or week, day or night work, etc.);

_____ Independence (work which necessitates the making of frequent decisions);

_____ Pay (large income during the year);

_____ Physical Considerations (work relatively free from frequent pressure or trying conditions);

_____ Regulative (work which includes administrative authority);

_____ Responsibility (work which requires the readiness to meet obligations);

_____ Satisfaction (work which gives you a feeling of accomplishment);

_____ Security (steady work, no lay-offs, sureness of being able to keep job);

_____ Scope (work which demands a great deal of ingenuity);

_____ Supervisor (a good boss who is considerate, fair, and receptive to new ideas);

_____ Type of Work (work which is well liked by you).

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LOS ANGELES
OCT 17 1975
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JUNIOR COLLEGE
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